

IC ANNUAL FOIA REPORT FY 2018

Please complete the following worksheet and return it to the NIH FOIA Office by 2:00pm, Thursday, October 18, 2018. NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED

PART I - FOIA Contact Information

IC: NEI

Name of Person Completing the Report: Trevor Peterson

Title: FOI Coordinator

Address: 31/6A11 Phone Number: (301) 496-4334

PART II – FOIA Request Data

- a. Number of FOIA requests pending at the end of FY 2017: 1 (This number was taken from the report you submitted last year)
- b. Number of FOIA requests received during FY 2018: 23
- c. Number of FOIA requests processed during FY 2018: 23
- d. Number of FOIA requests pending at the end of FY 2018: 1

NOTE: $a + b - c = d$

PART III - Cost Information

A. Personnel

- 1. How many full-time FOIA staff does your IC have: 0

NOTE: A “full-time FOIA employee” is a full-time employee or contractor who performs FOIA duties 100% of the time.

- 2. How many “Equivalent Full-Time FOIA Employees” work in your IC. **Provide this number in work years:** 0.05

NOTE: Employees or contractors performing less than full-time FOIA duties are either a) part-time employees who perform FOIA duties all, or part, of the time, or b) full-time employees who perform FOIA duties less than 100% of the time.

To determine the number in work years, ask everyone who does FOIA on a part-time or occasional basis to estimate the amount of time - in percents - they spend on FOIA related duties. Each 100% equals one full-time equivalent. You should include contractors if they are working on some aspect of FOIA.

Example 1:

Employee 1 – performs FOIA duties 20% of her time
Employee 2 – performs FOIA duties 35% of his time
Employee 3 – performs FOIA duties 75% of his time
Employee 4 – performs FOIA duties 15% of her time

In this example, the FOIA duties of these employees equals 145% of the time ($20 + 35 + 75 + 15 = 145$) and **this IC would report 1.45 in this section** ($145/100 = 1.45$)

Example 2:

Employees 1, 2, 3 and 4 – perform FOIA duties 50% of their time
Employee 5 – performs FOIA duties 75% of his time
Employee 6 – performs FOIA duties 10% of her time

In this example the FOIA duties of these employees equals 285 % ($50 \times 4 + 75 + 10 =$) and **this IC would report 2.85 in this section** ($285/100 = 2.85$).

3. Total number of “Full-Time FOIA Staff” _____ ($1 + 2 = 3$).

B. Costs

1. Processing Costs - Cost to your IC for FOIA processing during FY 2017:
_ \$4400 _

NOTE: Add together all costs expended by your IC for processing FOIA requests at both the initial request and the administrative appeal level. **Include salaries of FOIA personnel, overhead and any other FOIA-related expenses.** Salary information can be calculated by multiplying the annual salary of the employee by the percentage of time spent on FOIA (necessary to complete Section A). If your IC has a budget for your office, that may be a good source for this information.

****Part IV should be completed and returned to the NIH FOIA Office no later than COB, Monday, October 22, 2018.****

*** Any reference to “agency” means “IC”**

PART IV –Pro-Active Disclosures (Timeframe: March 2017 – present) This information is for the Annual Chief FOIA Officer’s Report which is submitted to HHS in early December. These are the questions posed in the report. Please check with your Communications Office as well as any other offices that generally post information to collect as many examples as you can. The submission should explain what was posted succinctly and include the link.

Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

Both the [President’s](#) and [DOJ’s](#) FOIA memoranda focused on the need for agencies to work proactively to post information online without waiting for individual requests to be received.

Please answer the following questions to describe the steps your agency has taken to increase the amount of material that is available on your agency websites. In addition to the questions below, you should also describe any additional steps taken by your agency to make and improve proactive disclosures of information.

Posting Material:

1. Describe your agency’s process or system for identifying “frequently requested” records that should be posted online.

No formal process. Our case load is small enough that the FOI Coordinator can notice trends and bring them up informally with our Office of Science Communications, Public Liaison, and Education.

2. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to identify other records for proactive disclosure? If so, please describe your agency’s process or system.

The Office of Science Communications, Public Liaison, and Education staff meet regularly to discuss information to disseminate. Also the heads of our intramural and extramural programs are queried regularly for suggestions on information to be disseminated via NEI media channels, public website, and social media accounts.

3. Has your agency encountered challenges that make it difficult to post records you otherwise would like to post?

Yes

4. If so, briefly explain those challenges and how your agency is working to overcome them.

Limited resources have not allowed us to convert records that were created before the digital age into forms suitable to post on the NEI public website. Currently we only disseminate these documents directly to inquirers who specifically request them. These documents include archived minutes of the National Eye Advisory Council (NAEC) meetings.

5. Provide examples of material that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including links to the posted material

We posted videocasts from our June 14, 2018 and January 18, 2018 National Advisory Eye Council (NAEC) meetings <https://nei.nih.gov/about/naec/mom>.

6. Did your agency use any means to publicize or highlight important proactive disclosures for public awareness? If yes, please describe these efforts.

To share information about significant findings from NEI-funded research, we post links to grantee institution press releases on the NEI public website ([News from NEI Grantees](#)).

In addition, we disseminated results from NEI-funded clinical and basic studies, including:

- [Five research teams will develop new models for eye disease research](#) *Posted on Oct 12, 2018*
- [Therapy applied directly inside the eye best for treating uveitic macular edema](#) *Posted on Sep 27, 2018*
- [Study suggests maintaining good vision may stave off cognitive decline](#) *Posted on Sep 24, 2018*
- [NIH vision researcher T. Michael Redmond recognized with Champalimaud Vision Award](#) *Posted on Sep 4, 2018*
- [Researchers find potential new gene therapy for blinding disease](#) *Posted on Aug 20, 2018*
- [NIH-funded researchers reverse congenital blindness in mice](#) *Posted on Aug 15, 2018*
- [Knights Templar Eye Foundation awards research grant to NEI scientist](#) *Posted on Jun 21, 2018*
- [NEI funded researchers identify 133 genetic variants that predict glaucoma risk](#) *Posted on May 31, 2018*
- [NIH researchers develop 'hibernation in a dish' to study how animals adapt to the cold](#) *Posted on May 3, 2018*
- [Omega-3s from fish oil supplements no better than placebo for dry eye](#) *Posted on Apr 13, 2018*
- [Immune cells in the retina can spontaneously regenerate](#) *Posted on Mar 21, 2018*
- [NIH launches international study of AMD progression](#) *Posted on Feb 23, 2018*
- [Low vision research shifts into overdrive](#) *Posted on Feb 20, 2018*
- [NIH solicits next-generation retina organoids in prize competition](#) *Posted on Feb 13, 2018*
- [NEI support paved early pathway for novel glaucoma therapies](#) *Posted on Feb 6, 2018*
- [NEI-funded research suggests repetitive strain from eye movement may play a role in glaucoma](#) *Posted on Jan 4, 2018*

- [NIH discovery brings stem cell therapy for eye disease closer to the clinic](#) *Posted on Jan 2, 2018*

In addition to posting on our public website, we shared our news via Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube (when appropriate), and multiple Listservs. In some instances, information was shared via the Facebook account for our National Eye Health Education Program.

Other Initiatives:

7. If there are any other steps your agency has taken to improve proactive disclosures, please describe them here. For example, has your agency engaged requesters in determining how and what to post? Has your agency used web analytics to inform your proactive disclosures?

Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

A key component of the President's [FOIA Memorandum](#) was the direction to "use modern technology to inform citizens about what is known and done by their Government." In addition to using the internet to make proactive disclosures, agencies should also be exploring ways to utilize technology in responding to requests.

Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is utilizing technology to improve its FOIA administration and the public's access to information. You should also include any additional information that describes your agency's efforts in this area.

Making Material Posted Online More Useful:

1. Beyond posting new material, is your agency taking steps to make the posted information more useful to the public, especially to the community of individuals who regularly access your agency's website?

Yes

2. If yes, please provide examples of such improvements.

NEI maintains a responsive version of our public website that allows optimal views for visitors using smartphones, tablets, and desktop computers.

NEI has restored text-to-speech technology (ReadSpeaker) on our public website. ReadSpeaker allows our web content to be read aloud to those visitors who prefer this option, which may help those with visual impairments or low literacy needs. The tool is available for both English and Spanish web content.

3. Have your agency's FOIA professionals interacted with other agency staff (such as technology specialists or public affairs or communications professionals) in order to identify if there are any new ways to post agency information online?

NEI communications staff and the FOIA coordinator have discussed ways to gather additional information to include in our online Knowledgebase.

Use of Technology to Facilitate Processing of Requests:

4. Did your agency conduct training for FOIA staff on any new processing tools during the reporting period, such as for a new case management system, or for search, redaction, or other processing tools?

No

5. Beyond using technology to redact documents, is your agency taking steps to utilize more advanced technology to facilitate overall FOIA efficiency, such as improving record search capabilities, utilizing document sharing platforms for consultations and referrals, or employing software that can sort and de-duplicate documents? If yes please describe:

- The technological improvements being made.
- The impact of using these technologies on your agency's request processing.

Yes—migrating to FOIAXpress with the rest of NIH

6. Are there additional tools that could be utilized by your agency to create further efficiencies?